Discussion 1:

L2: Dr. Black's Model of Political Discussion (Practice):

What are your thoughts about Dr. Black’s model of political discussion? Is it an approach Christians should take? Is it realistic for Christians to turn the tide of the political conversations around them, moving away from disrespectful discussion to Christ-honoring discussion?

Discussion 2:

L6: Diagram:

Where do you most closely fit in the diagram: sanctified separatist, political prophet, private patriot, or righteous redeemer? Why?

Discussion 3:

Documentary (Post Once on Monday or Wednesday):

How would you define the common good? What are roadblocks to achieving it, and how can Christians overcome those roadblocks?

Discussion 4:

L13: Direct Democracy:

In spring 2018, Dr. Cawvey taught a class on politics and film at Oklahoma State University. The main writing assignment in the course entailed preparing a script on politics and science fiction. One student focused on a fictional direct democracy. Please review a shortened version of the script, and then answer the following questions:

1. What is the conflict in the script?

2. What is the role of the Arbiter and the Arbiter's Council in the direct democracy?

3. How does the script critique direct democracy?

4. What do you personally see as the advantages and disadvantages of direct democracy?

5. How do you think the story ends?

Discussion 5:

L14: Explaining American Exceptionalism:

In your view, why does the United States tax and spend less than other advanced industrial democracies?

Discussion 6:

Discussion Board 1 (March 1–6):

This week, we are studying American political culture (chapter 4 of our textbook American Difference*). Please read this article about public opinion on **Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency**, and then join the conversation! In your posts, feel free to limit the number of characters to 280, the maximum for free accounts on Musk's social media site X, formerly Twitter! ☺*

*By **11:59 p.m. on Tuesday**, you should respond **in full** to Question 1 **or** Question 2 in the prompt with **a single post** (deadline 1). Then, you will have access to your fellow students' posts and be able to continue the discussion until **Thursday at 11:59 p.m.** (deadline 2). In total, you should submit **five** countable posts containing at least one comment or question, and **at least three** of your posts should respond to one or more of your fellow students. (In other words, after your initial post, you are welcome to have three posts that respond to others and then a final post that begins a new thread in reply to another question in the prompt. Or after your first post, feel free to have four additional posts that respond to others.)*

*Please practice Dr. Black's advice on political civility, paying attention to other people's viewpoints while communicating your own beliefs. If you feel passionate about a particular topic of conversation, that's great! But please also be considerate, **loving your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12:31)**.*

For more on the discussion boards, please see the overall assignment prompt: PO 101 Discussion Boards 1–2_Spring 2025.docx

Question 1: Do you support the **overall** mission of the Department of Government Efficiency? Is the organization's **general** purpose consistent with U.S. political culture, as articulated in chapter 4 of *American Difference*? Please explain.

Question 2: In light of American political culture (chapter 4 of *American Difference*) and your own opinion, what do you think about the following **specific** questions motivated by the news article on the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE)?

- Should DOGE interfere with current contracts and expenditures or focus on future spending cuts?
- Should DOGE have power to trigger layoffs throughout federal agencies?
- Should DOGE have access to personal information (e.g., names, Social Security numbers, incomes, and addresses) to reduce wasteful and fraudulent federal spending on Social Security payments and other social programs?
- Should Musk find loopholes to avoid complying with federal court orders to halt DOGE's activities?

Discussion 7:

L17: Proportionality:

Is it preferable to prevent public disorder by banning offensive speech and dangerous public assembly, or should we punish any disorder that occurs after the fact? Why?

Discussion 8:

L18: Consensus or Majoritarian?:

Would you prefer to live in a consensus or majoritarian democracy? Why?

Discussion 9:

Discussion Board 2 (March 24–27):

This week, we are studying the executive and legislative branches through chapters 6 and 7 of the American Difference *textbook. Please read this article about the U.S. Department of Defense, and then join the conversation!*

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Question 1: The article refers to "angry lawmakers," in addition to the Department of Defense. How is this an example of the U.S. presidential system of government? If enough members of Congress become angry at the Department of Defense, how could Congress hold the military accountable for its actions? Are **you** angry at the Department of Defense for removing webpages flagged as potentially supportive of diversity, equity, and inclusion? Why or why not?

Question 2: If you were a member of Congress and held a “trustee” view of representation, how would you respond to news of the Department of Defense removing webpages flagged as potentially supportive of diversity, equity, and inclusion? Now suppose you perceived yourself as a “delegate.” What information would you need to know how to respond to the same news? Please explain.

Discussion 10:

L20: Evaluating Pluralism:

What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of the U.S. interest group system of pluralism?

Discussion 11:

April 4: MPSA:

What was most interesting to you from the MPSA panel?

Discussion 12:

L21: Immigration:

How would you respond to the two center–periphery conflicts in today’s lecture? If the federal government is not enforcing immigration law, should states do so—or is immigration enforcement a proper responsibility for the federal government alone? Finally, should state and local officials be required to cooperate with federal immigration authorities or risk losing federal funding?

Discussion 13:

L22: Thought Experiment:

Which system would you prefer: district magnitude equals 1, or district magnitude equals 7? Why?

Discussion 14:

L23: Mock Election:

Suppose that you had 4 candidates running for Congress, and this is all the information that you had on the candidates (percentages below are based on a pre-election survey):

- Candidate 1, preferred by 30% of the electorate: “My top issue is education. I want to forgive college student debt.”
- Candidate 2, preferred by 17.5% of the electorate: “My top issue is the federal debt. I believe that we should lower spending to pay down the national debt.”
- Candidate 3, preferred by 12.5% of the electorate: “My top issue is foreign wars. We should promote peace in Israel and Ukraine.”
- Candidate 4, preferred by 40% of the electorate: “My top issue is China’s aggression in its foreign policy. I want to enforce international law about respecting international waters and international trade rules.”

Predict the final vote total for each candidate, according to Duverger’s Law.

Discussion 15:

L25: Comparative Method:

Why did South Carolina start reopening its economy in 2020 sooner than North Carolina did? To answer this question, rule out what the states have in common, and then identify a difference that provides a logical explanation for South Carolina’s decision to reopen sooner. Please discuss why this difference offers a logical explanation.